12/13/71

Dear Walter,

One of the frightening things about being away is the accumulation that will await on return. I'm getting to the bottom of that stack and will then have to address what I left undone. One of these things is an enormous lawsuit in which I am my own attorney. It is a story that will make a movie. I call it "Everything Happened", conceiving it, in the moments I can detach myself from its horror, which has not been often enough for decent writing in years, as a combination of "The Egg and I" and "Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House".

Of all the oppressive realities, this is the most depressing.

On this trip, aside from the purposes for which I made it, I came accross what I think would make a good book and was reminded of one of which I wrote you without any response I can recall.

The first is a Mafia story I'm surprised hasn't been done, a true one, of how they ruined an honest legislator who continues, with futility, to fight them while they, apparently afraid of reaction, let him live a futility of trying to expose them.

The second is what also should make a movie, the inside story of H.L.Hunt. I told you I saw him and that he offered me a writing job. With some grace, I diverted the old man, who is entering senility. I did him a very big favor a while back. Unlike the dog, who at least wags his tail, there is no thanks in the remnant of a man who may be the world's wealthiest.

I have a friend who used to be his chief of security. He knows the nitty-gritty. And right now the two more able sons (of the acknowledged children), both inordinately wealthy, can't wait for the old bastard to die. They are dangerous - and very prominent-men. One owns the Kansas City ball club, maybe football. One has a kind of private army. They have already separated the old man from control of his property, leaving him his nutty literature and a cosmetics firm to play with.

What led to my friend's leaving is a humanitarian thing the monsters could not abide, getting the father to make an arrangement for his bastards, while he is alive, for once he is dead the two sons, neither of whom, apparently, can conceive of having enough money, would not permit even a groschen for them.

A rather humorous bit: they decided they had to get my friend, forgetting that he knows his business, having learned it in the FBI. So, they got some wiretappers from a distant city. Now it happens my friend lives in suburban Dallas, a community with its own police force. Need I say they are his friends? And his wife is a professional woman, a psychiatrist. So, they bugged. And my friend caught them, with his police friends, with all the illegal equipment in their car, with all the tapes they had made in their motel room. Then he filed a $1,000,000 suit, in his wife's name, professional damage and intrusion into personal privacy and a few other things. Needless to say, the boys didn't want this to go to trial. So, the buggers are convicted, there was a settlement, and I didn't inquire into its nature. It was enough for me that he took me to the Texas Club and drove me around in a new Cadillac.

This is a digression, not central to the story, which is that of the most unbelievable man who gambled his way to this almost unimaginable fortune, all the time a real nut. He is the world's tightest tightwad. When he brought out his first book - his! - he fired his ghost without a minute's notice, no severance pay (a secretary sued him for overtime recently), and then took his wife and younger kids out to peddle the book on the streets with him-on corners!. What I am suggesting is a Citizen Kane, in oil. And all true. Not for me to write, just to arrange. For your edification, I enclose a sample of his cheapness with the cheapest commodity, paper-his new leaflet on Messinger. Prize it. It came from HLH's hand. Best,